

The State has no duty more imperative than the conservation and the promotion of health. Four years ago the General Assembly passed the vital statistics law. It has done immense good in ascertaining the causes of disease and death. The work for the prevention of disease has been stimulated. The State Board of Health is waging a campaign of energy and intelligence against tuberculosis, typhoid fever and malaria—such diseases that can be exterminated by intelligent and determined action. Many counties have employed health officers. They are doing good work, but as yet the health work is by the county as a unit. The conservation of health is not a local question. The State has an interest. The State Board of Health should have general supervision of this work, and each community should have the benefit of its expert knowledge and wide experience. This board should have power to know by systematic reports the condition and the work in each locality. Such correlation and publicity would increase efficiency and excite emulation by every health officer in the State. The State Board should be given the power to enforce any reasonable measures to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. Modern facilities for travel give wings to disease. Infantile paralysis, scarlet fever, and other contagious may in a day be transported to distant counties for the establishment of new centers of infection, with dire calamity. The State law provides no protection against this. The Federal statute provides against interstate contagion, but there is no State statute to protect against inter-county contagion.

North Carolina has the largest birth rate as to white children of any State in the Union—more babies per capita than any other country. This “infant industry” deserves and demands *protection*. They are the most desirable immigrants, thoroughbred from Norman and Saxon sires.

#### PRISONS.

During the last four years the State's Prison has been successful beyond precedent. Above all expenses of every kind it has earned for the State the net sum of \$350,000. To the superintendent of the Prison, the board of directors and their subordinates credit must be given for this result. The institution has been managed with ability, honesty, economy, and in humane consideration for the prisoner. This money has been made for the State by the work of the prisoners on the State farm, on the State highways, on the railroads, and at the quarries and dams of the Yadkin River.

The making of money for the State is not the principal purpose of prison management. In this floodtide of prosperity and plenty the families of most of the prisoners were in need of food and raiment. In many instances women and children were destitute. The poor little ones suffer in winter. To me it seemed just, and to the Prison Board it seemed just, that out of the earnings of the unfortunates a small amount be sent to their scanty needy homes to relieve some distress, and as a testimonial of justice and sympathy. This seemed especially appropriate in these days of good-will and benevolence. Some may criticise this act as unauthorized, and object to it as an unsafe precedent, but if this General Assembly condemn it, every dollar of the money will be returned. “‘Swear,’ said the captious Roman tribune to the consul, ‘swear that you have observed the laws.’ ‘I swear,’ said the consul, ‘that I have served the Republic.’” And we, too, in this have obeyed the law of